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To: Dr. Kara Evans and ILAC members  
From: Dr. Maureen Patterson, Director of Education Leadership Programs  
Date: September 13, 2021  
Re: **SLA Summary Report, September 2021**

**Project Title:** *Leading Schools in a Time of Renewed Reflection on Diversity and Leadership*

**Project Questions:**

1. Are the content and pedagogical methods in the EDL courses appropriate and applicable to address the evolving structures and issues in public education, with a special focus on the urban school setting?
  - a. Structures may include developing culturally and racially integrated, non-biased hiring and retention practices, relevant and rigorous curriculum and instruction, collaborative supervision process, focused professional development, and equitable programs for students in special education and ENL programs.
  - b. Issues may include developing dialogues and trainings to create K-12 stakeholders and associated programming that is culturally and racially diverse, focuses on social justice and equity, and enables family-school engagement practices that are inclusive and dynamic.
2. What changes in course content and pedagogical methods should be made for the next semester of coursework in order to attain the goal of creating a leadership program that focuses on the diversity of the students, staff, families, and curriculum?

The LEADS @ SCSD program is a uniquely designed cohort of education leadership students who work in the Syracuse City School District (SCSD). 2020-2021 was the first year of the SCSD cohort. The students are developing skills and knowledges to become school leaders for urban districts. The students were specifically recruited from SCSD and four of the eight courses have been taught by administrators from the district.

The **key components** of the project include the following:

1. Students complete a google survey each semester after completing the LEADS courses.
  - a. Survey seeks feedback on the content, assignments and pedagogy of the two required semester courses
  - b. Survey focuses on school leadership in an urban district, with a specific emphasis on social justice and culturally responsive leadership
  - c. Share results with Adjuncts so that adjustments to content, assignments and pedagogy can be made as necessary
2. Students and Adjuncts participate in a forum each semester to discuss the survey questions and answers, and to allow both stakeholders to provide feedback and make suggestions for changes in the teaching and learning.

**Summary of year-long project:**



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It was an exciting venture to create a cohort of students who taught in the Syracuse City School District and who were eager to become school leaders in the district. They made a professional commitment to the District as teachers, and wanted to continue their legacy as leaders.

The schedule of courses was as follows:

Summer 2020 –	EDL 501 (Social Justice in School Leadership) and EDL 503 (Culturally Responsive Leadership)
Fall 2020 –	EDL 510 (Labor Management) and EDL 515 (Assessment and Accountability)
J-mester 2021 –	EDL 610 (Issues in Curriculum and Instruction)
Spring 2021 –	EDL 525 (Supervision of Instruction) and EDL 505 (Finance and Facilities)
Summer 2021 –	EDL 520 (The Principalship)
As Scheduled	EDL 555 (Leadership Internship)

Each semester the LEADS @ SCSD cohort participated in a google form survey seeking feedback about curricula, pedagogy, course format, and whether or not there was a focus on diversity and inclusion as applicable to the course content. An interesting point is that the entire program of eight School Building Leadership courses were held in a remote fashion to the COVID pandemic. The students did negotiate face to face internships in the school district and in a couple cases in a suburban district.

**In response to the first question on curricular and pedagogical appropriateness, the answer is a resounding yes.**

#### **Results of the survey responses and forums:**

1. Students were pleased with the opportunities to provide feedback.
  - a. Appreciated the experience and expertise of the professors, who are working practitioners in the field of education leadership.
    - i. Focus on Professional Standards for Education Leaders (PSELs)
  - b. Appreciated the personal stories related to career paths and leadership roles
  - c. Appreciated the focus on leading in an urban district with topics focused on that arena
  - d. Appreciated the responsive and collaborative attitude and approach of the professors
  - e. Felt the assignments were relevant and authentic and would be helpful to them in the future – key assignments noted
    - i. Self-Assessment (EDL 501)
    - ii. School Policy Adjustments (EDL 503)
    - iii. Finance Activity Worksheets (EDL 505)



- iv. Contract Negotiations (EDL 510)
- v. Group Project on equitable and accessible education (EDL 515)
- vi. One Year Action Plan (EDL 520)
- vii. Clinical Supervision Evaluation (EDL 525)
- viii. Curriculum Audit Project (EDL 610)
- f. Appreciated the pedagogy used to teach the curricula
  - i. Introducing ASCD in the first course as a resource for all courses
  - ii. Discussions on Canvas and in synchronous Zoom sessions
  - iii. Breakout rooms for dialogue
  - iv. Jamboard and other Google tools
  - v. Screencast
  - vi. Canvas posts and response strategies
  - vii. Case studies
  - viii. Videos
  - ix. Technology – Nearpod, Desmos
  - x. Guest speakers
- 2. Students appreciated
  - a. Open conversations about social justice, culture, race, equity and inclusion
  - b. Comparative information between urban, suburban, and rural districts
  - c. Reflective aspect of each course
- 3. Students suggested
  - a. Use of videos on leadership in the urban setting
  - b. Include more scenarios and examples specific to the urban setting
  - c. Recommendation of books and other resources specific to diversity and leadership
  - d. Provision of an assignment sheet with detailed expectations and rubrics for each assignment
  - e. Shifting some of the online discussions and postings to in-class instruction and dialogue
  - f. Incorporate more practice discussing diversity, bias, and social justice throughout all of the courses
  - g. Provide an exemplar for certain assignments
  - h. More guest speakers from SCSD
  - i. Reduce assignments that may be redundant – portfolio communication is an example
  - j. Include more practice on courageous conversations with staff
  - k. Provide opportunity to shadow administrators in district as part of assignments
  - l. Consider course session and amount of reading –
    - i. j-mester was just 5 weeks, and 3 textbooks were a challenge
  - m. Consider synchronous and asynchronous sessions and make them as engaging as possible for educators who are also teaching/counseling all day in the same type of instructional environment



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**In response to the second question, the EDL Team has reviewed and will continue to assess the responses and incorporate the suggestions into the EDL courses. Each semester after the feedback was gathered, the EDL Adjuncts met to review the responses and suggestions and incorporated those as applicable to all of the cohorts and syllabi in the EDL program.**

Implemented suggestions included and will continue to include:

1. Publish Canvas course earlier with syllabi and text requirements
2. Create an Assignment Sheet with due dates and rubric expectations
3. Incorporate relevant and up-to-date examples
4. Provide more group work, rather than individual assignments, to reflect the reality of professional projects
5. Continue to hold individual and group meetings with Director and Professors as requested or needed
6. Consider speakers from urban districts for this cohort
7. Continue to use engaging technological tools during instruction and assessment

This was a particularly ambitious cohort of eleven women, eight of whom completed the School Building Leadership program in just 13 months by negotiating their internships to begin half-way through the program. The other three students are currently finishing or starting their internship. Of the eight graduates, all have taken new roles and/or leadership responsibilities for the 2021-2022 school year in the SCSD.

**A few comments from students in emails to me this summer include:**

*The LEADS @ SCSD program has changed my educational career path because it has made me want to be a better teacher and prepared me to embark upon a new journey as an educational leader outside of the classroom. It is also important for me to remember that no matter the role we are all people first and one should never forget that always leading with humility.*

*I started the LEADS @ SCSD as an instructional coach and it has changed my career path tremendously by preparing me and honing my leadership skills to assist me in getting an Administrative Intern position in the SCSD for this upcoming school year.*

*I never saw myself as much of a leader, until the SCSD Leads program. The program showed me how I was already a leader and has given me the skills and confidence to step up and lead openly, and not from the sidelines.*

*I went from aspiring to a leader, refining my skills and changing the lens. I built confidence and I'm creating a network.*



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**The budget for the SLA Grant for EDL:**

Maureen Patterson, Director \$1,000 plus the 5 sessions (\$40/hour for each session) = \$1,200

11 Adjuncts and Intern Supervisors who participated for 5 hours (at \$40 per session) =  
 $200 \times 11 = \$2,200$

Jennifer King-Reese, Adjunct	\$200
Jason Armstrong, Adjunct	\$200
Jeff Gordon, Adjunct	\$200
Donna Marie Norton, Adjunct	\$200
Elizabeth Conners, Adjunct	\$200
Anthony Q Davis, Adjunct	\$200
Karl Seckner, Adjunct	\$200
Diane Vitello, Adjunct	\$200

Suzanne Gilmour, Intern Supervisor	\$200
Sarah Feinberg, Intern Supervisor	\$200
Donna Zeolla, Intern Supervisor	\$200